



NEWS RELEASE

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The people behind the curtain

By Capt. Geoffrey Fischer
C2TIG Public Affairs

Hurlburt Field, Fla.— “Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain!” says the “wizard” in the Wizard of Oz, as he madly presses buttons and pulls levers.

His job was to make the Wizard real for who ever wanted to talk to him. And just like the Wizard, we have a group of people making Joint Expeditionary Force eXperiment 1999 real to the participants.

“We’re the person behind the curtain,” said Maj. Hartley Kinsey, 505th Exercise Control Squadron director of operations. “Our whole job is to provide the stimulus and inputs to the players that are doing the action.”

In JEFX 99 the players are experimenting with new equipment and processes to help bring in more completely space-based capabilities and information into our aerospace operations in the future.

And the key to making JEFX 99 successful is to make it as real for the players as possible. And that’s where the people from the 505th Systems Squadron and 505 ECS are important.

“These inputs should be absolutely real,” Kinsey said. “As far as they know, it’s going to be the same as they would see in Korea, the Persian Gulf or wherever they might deploy.”

The team on the second floor of the Command and Control Training and Innovation Group building at Hurlburt Field, Fla. is putting together a virtual battle space over a fictitious country and making it as real as possible for the players.

They are combining real inputs from planes flying over ranges at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev. and putting them with computer generated aircraft onto the same system that the players are looking at. They do it so well that when the players look at the screen, they can’t tell the difference between the real and the computer aircraft.

“We want to produce a virtual picture of an air war and all of its logistics,” Kinsey said. “If people in an area need food, we need to schedule aircraft to fly beans. Just like we would in a real operation.”

In order for the players to have a complete picture 20 different types of computer systems need to be linked together. “We start working on the models and equipment months in advance,” Kinsey said.

“It’s been a build-up through the different spirals,” said Tech. Sgt. Dan Brown, 505 SYS night-shift supervisor. Spirals are the development processes leading up to the experiment where they determine which systems are needed and how they will work together, tailored specifically for the objectives of the experiment.

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“We make sure everything is working by the time the player sits down,” Brown said.

“Without our inputs, the equipment they are using wouldn’t show anything,” Kinsey said. “They would be getting a piece of paper with a note that shows what they *should* be seeing and that’s not what they need to experiment successfully.”

The team during the experiment also plays live roles of whoever is needed, Kinsey said. “If the players need a general, we’re a general. If they need to talk to a pilot, we put on headphones and talk like a pilot.”

In the make believe world of JEFX 99 it is the 505 ECS and 505 SYS team that are the wizards pushing the buttons and pulling the levers to make it as real as possible.